

Proper 14

[Home](#) [Up](#)

Pentecost 12 August 11, 2002

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray and to give more than we either desire or deserve. Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merit of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

"The germ of this Collect is Leonine. The later Gelasian form added the clause 'forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid,' and the Prayer Book (1549) added to the invocation the phrase 'who art always more ready to hear than we to pray.' Bishop Cosin in 1662 further changed the conclusion from 'giving unto us that that our prayer dare not ask' to the present full form." [1]

1 Kings 19:9-18

{9} At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" {10} He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." {11} He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; {12} and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. {13} When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" {14} He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." {15} Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. {16} Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. {17} Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. {18} Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Elijah has demonstrated the power of Yahweh in a contest between himself and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Elijah prevailed and had the prophets of Baal killed. When Ahab told Jezebel what had happened she vowed to kill Elijah. Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. He was fed miraculously by Yahweh and after forty days arrived at Mt. Horeb (Sinai) (1 Kings 18:1-19:8).

9. *a cave*: The cave was on Mt. Horeb (verse 8) to which Elijah had fled from Jezebel. "The tradition of Elijah at Horeb is strongly coloured by that of the theophany to Moses at Sinai, cf. v. 11, describing the 'passing' of God, cf. Ex. 33.19, already current in J." [2]

10. *I have been very zealous for the LORD*: Zealous, "*qana*" is used of the enthusiasm of exclusive devotion. It amounts to fanatical intolerance as in the case of Jehu (II K. 10.16). It is also used of Yahweh's intolerance of other gods in worship of his people, his 'jealousy' (Ex. 20.5)." [3]

the Israelites have forsaken your covenant: This is a rhetorical exaggeration since the people acknowledged Yahweh at Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:39).

your altars: The plural here indicates that the writer is not familiar with the deuteronomic expectation of a single altar (Deuteronomy 27:5, et al).

killed your prophets with the sword: See 1 Kings 18:4, 13.

I alone am left: But Obadiah hid 100 prophets in caves to save their lives. Also in verse 18 there are seven thousand people in Israel who have not worshipped Baal.

11. the Lord is about to pass by: The phrase is similar to that in Exodus 33:19.

11-12: "The meaning of the theophany seems to us...to be an admonition to the prophet to expect, not the supernatural and spectacular inbreaking of Yahweh into history anticipated in the traditional liturgy of the cult with the accompaniments of storm, earthquake, and fire..., but rather an intelligible revelation to find God's direction in the ordinary course of daily life and to communicate it regularly and constructively." [4]

12. a sound of sheer silence: This is not a natural silence, but like the silence before creation it is the emptiness Yahweh fills with his word. It "...is to be understood as a deliberate attempt to separate the Israelite concept of theophany from the religious ideas of the ancient Near East... Theophany occurs when all tangible manifestations of power are out of the question, and yet it is just as immediately and intensively near as an unsuspected breath of air..." [5]

13. Elijah...wrapped his face in his mantle: He did this to avoid seeing Yahweh. When Yahweh appeared to Moses he covered Moses with his hand so Moses would not see him and die (Exodus 33:20-23).

13-14. What are you doing here, Elijah?: Yahweh repeats his question from verse 9. And Elijah repeats his answer from verse 10.

14: This verse is cited in the second lesson next week.

15-17: "The proleptic reference to the anointing of Hazael and Jehu may have been prompted by a reference to the prophet's duty to interpret the events of history as tokens of the will of God, in the fashion which became traditional in the great prophets, or even to utilize such contingencies to further the will of God in Israel. The reference, however, was most probably not particularly to Hazael or Jehu, but more general." [6]

15. you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram: Hazael is not anointed by Elijah. Elisha simply announces that he is to be king over Aram (2 Kings 8:13).

16. you shall anoint Elisha...as prophet in your place: "There is no other case of the conferring of prophetic authority by anointing, though priests were anointed." [7] In the story of Elisha's commissioning Elisha is not anointed, but empowered by contact with Elijah's mantle (2 Kings 2:14-15).

17: Yahweh's purposes are to be fulfilled by his anointed. In the event, Elisha kills no one.

18. seven thousand: Not a specific number. "The 'seven' in the seven thousand loyalists is the conventional indefinite number of saga." [8]

Psalm 85:8-13

{8} Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. {9} Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. {10} Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. {11} Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. {12} The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. {13} Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

"The praying assembly waits for Yahweh's answer to its praying and pleading [verses 4-7]. This is transmitted in the form of a priestly or prophetic 'oracle of salvation.'... The speaker of Ps. 85:8ff. is a ,Olw-prophet (Jer. 6:14; 8:11; Isa. 57:19)... the speaker in Psalm 85 is caught up in the continuing effect of the salvific message of Deutero-Isaiah. The criticism practiced, for instance, in Jeremiah and the degrading of the ,Olw-prophets cannot be permitted to lead to discrediting the

inspiration of these men on principle." [9]

10-11. *steadfast love and faithfulness...righteousness and peace*: These are qualities which are the foundation of the covenants between Yahweh and his people. Here they are treated as though they are physical entities (see Isaiah 59:14 for similar expressions).

13. *Righteousness will go before him*: "Like a herald qdc [*tsedek*, righteousness] strides along ahead of Yahweh as he appears for the end-time theophany.... In the footsteps of God as he marches along, salvation springs up miraculously." [10]

Romans 10:5-15

{5} Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." {6} But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) {7} "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). {8} But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); {9} because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. {10} For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. {11} The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." {12} For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. {13} For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." {14} But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? {15} And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

5. *"the person who does these things will live"*: Leviticus 18:5.

6. *the righteousness that comes from faith*: "A contrast is introduced between the two aeons or the two ways of attaining uprightness in God's sight. Personified uprightness is contrasted with the lawgiver, Moses.... Paul is not bluntly disagreeing with Moses; he recognizes the validity of the Mosaic dictum and undoubtedly would consider it valid for Jewish Christians. He realizes, however, that in this new aeon uprightness announces a new mode." [11]

Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven...' 'Who will descend into the abyss...': An allusion to Deuteronomy 9:4 and 30:11. Christ has already ascended into the abyss and ascended into heaven.

8. *The word is near you....*: Deuteronomy 30:14.

9. *if you confess with your lips...and believe in your heart*: One confesses with the mouth, that is, says *Shema*; another believes in Jesus. One is justified, the other is saved. "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all."

10. We have here a description of two ways to the same end. Moses writes that one lives by the law by keeping it, while the one who believes confesses that Jesus is Lord. Both demonstrate their faith in the promises of God, though in different ways.

12. *For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all*: While there is no distinction between Jew and Greek (Gentile), we seek to make distinctions that advance "us" over "them," and force "them" to do the same.

13-15: The task of evangelism is not to exclude people, to insist on a specific predetermined response, but to bring good news, to be as generous as the Lord toward all who call on him.

Matthew 14:22-33

{22} Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. {23} And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, {24} but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. {25} And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. {26} But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. {27} But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." {28} Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." {29} He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. {30} But when he

noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" {31} Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" {32} When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. {33} And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

24. *far from land*: Literally, "many stadia from land." A *stadion* is 200 meters.

25. *early in the morning*: Literally, "in the fourth watch of the night," between three and six in the morning, before dawn.

26. *ghost*: *Fēntasma* [Phantasma].

27. *It is I*: An allusion to the name of God, Yahweh, "I am who I am."

28. *Lord, if it is you...*: Peter plays the part of the Satan, the adversary, and Jesus will say in Matthew 16:23.

30: Peter illustrates the description of the those who fall away because of trouble in the parable of the soils (Matthew 13:5-6, 20-21).

33. *Truly you are the Son of God*: God declares that Jesus is his son at his baptism (3:17), and reaffirms that declaration at the Transfiguration (17:5). In the temptation narrative Jesus is challenged twice by the tempter (the devil) (4:3, 6). At Caesarea Philippi Peter confesses "You are the messiah, the son of the living God" (16:16). At his trial and again on the cross he is asked if he is the Son of God (26:63), and challenged to come down from the cross if he is (27:40). At the cross some claim that Jesus said, "I am the Son of God" (27:43). Jesus is recognized and identified as the Son of God by demoniacs (8:29) and by the disciples (14:33). At the crucifixion a centurion declares, "Truly this man was God's Son!" (27:54). Throughout the Gospel of Matthew Jesus' identity as Son of God is constantly pointed out.

The crown prince of Judah, the prince-regent, messiah is God's Son (Psalm 2). The crown prince is also a descendant of the house of David. Matthew's genealogy is of Jesus the messiah, the son of David (1:1). Joseph is called son of David by the angel of the Lord (1:20). When Jesus entered Jerusalem he was greeted, "Hosanna to the son of David" (15:22). Jesus is called son of David by blind men (9:27; 20:30f.), crowds (12:23, 21:9) and children (21:15). The children's ascription angers the chief priests and the scribes, but Jesus quotes a proverbial saying, "Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you [God] have prepared praise for yourself?" It seems that he accepts their acclamation. On the other hand, Jesus objects to the idea that the messiah is the Son of David (22:42-45).

Reflection

Elijah believed he had a good reason to expect that God would be favorable toward him, he had been very zealous for Yahweh. But God sent a sign that he would not be found in dramatic appearances, but rather in silence. The Lord will bring peace to his people, and all things will be well. There will even be peace between those who follow different ways of serving God. The service of the hand and the service of the heart, though different, are both acceptable to the Lord. From Peter's experiences with Jesus we learn that the ways of God are beyond our understanding. If we know him and confess him as the Son of God, then we must seek to imitate his love and compassion for those who have lost their way, those who have been abused, those who beyond our efforts to save, but never beyond his.

Hymns [12]

With One Voice (e.g. 762v), *Hymnal Supplement* 1991 (e.g. 725s) and *LBW* (e.g. 32).

E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, P=Psalm; II=Second Lesson; G=Gospel

773s E--Jesus, Come! For

467 D--Eternal Father, Strong

708s P--Psalm 105: Thanks

333 G--Lord, Take My

781v G--My Life Flows

731v G--Precious Lord (824s)

Prayers of the People [13]

P or A: Christ sees to the needs of the crowds. Let us bring our needs and those of all people before God saying, "Show us your marvelous loving-kindness," and responding, "Hear our prayer."

A: You choose leaders to provide for your people, yet at times they come to you downhearted and empty-handed. Let us bring forward whatever talent and treasure we have, ask the blessing of Christ and see how graciously you provide in every need. Show us your marvelous loving-kindness. Hear us, we pray.

A: You call forth leaders for the nations. May we be governed in peace and with justice. Defeat plans for war and intimidation. How long will the poverty-stricken and the brutalized wait for your jubilee of freedom? Show us your marvelous loving-kindness. Hear us, we pray.

A: We struggle with our destiny as your daughters and sons. We ache for a way to make a difference in the world and honor your name and creative purpose. We need courage to stand firm and not give up until we have received your blessing. Bless the Lutheran Student Movement Canada now at their conference in Saskatoon Show us your marvelous loving-kindness. Hear us, we pray.

A: We know of the compassion of Jesus for the sick among the crowds he encountered. We ask for that compassion and healing in our lives and for all who suffer from addiction, depression or illness. We remember those who have asked for our prayers: _____. Show us your marvelous loving-kindness. Hear us, we pray.

P: Guide us in the truth of Christ. Confirm us in your Holy Spirit. Use us to provide for the needs of all, so that baskets of pieces that are left over, may be gathered and saved so that nothing may be lost. Amen.

Or [14]

Presider or deacon

As Jonah prayed from the belly of the fish, and Peter cried out from the waves, let us pray to the Lord our God, who hears our voice from the heart of the flood.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

For all nations and their leaders, and for mercy, justice, and peace in the world.

For farmers and a good harvest, for sailors and all who work at sea, for travelers and those on vacation, and for safety from violent storms.

For all those in danger and need: the sick and the dying, the poor and the oppressed, prisoners and their families, victims of terror, and those who commit violence.

For those who rest in Christ and for all the dead.

For our city and every community, and for our families, companions, and all we love.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with the blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

God of Israel, Lord of wind and water, hear the prayers we offer this day for all battered by the waves of this world and bring them in safety to your harbor; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Notes

[1] Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Liturgy of the Lutheran*

Church in America. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947, p. 532.

[2] John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970, p. 408.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 410.

[4] *Loc. cit.*

[5] A. Baumann, “ hmd [*damah*],” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. (ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren). Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978, Vol. 3, page 265.

[6] *Loc. cit.*

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 411.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 412.

[9] Han-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989, pp. 176f.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[11] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 589.

[12] <http://www.worship.ca/text/wpch0102.txt>

[13] http://www.worship.ca/text/int_a2.txt

[14] <http://members.cox.net/oplater/prayer.htm>